

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Ebola For Frontline Staff

Updated 10/10/14, 10:00 am

Am I at risk for contracting Ebola if I come for an appointment at your facility?

We have not had any patients with Ebola at our facility and there haven't been any patients with Ebola in Washington. Because Ebola is only passed from one person to another by direct contact with the blood or body fluids of someone who is sick with Ebola, you couldn't get Ebola by coming to our facility.

Could I get Ebola from a sick person at your facility?

We have not had any patients with Ebola infection here or anywhere in our state. But even in the very unlikely event that someone with Ebola happened to be in the same place at the same time as you, it would still be unlikely that you would contract it.

Ebola is not spread by being the same area as a sick person, and it is not spread through the air. It is not like the flu or the measles--it is much less contagious and much harder to get from someone else. To contract Ebola, you must have direct contact with the blood or body fluids of someone sick with Ebola, and that contact would have to be through your eyes, nose or mouth, or a cut in your skin.

We have procedures to quickly determine any risk of Ebola for any patient upon arrival. If we found anyone with any possibility of Ebola infection, we would keep that person out of all public areas.

Could I catch Ebola from someone who hasn't yet started to have symptoms of Ebola?

No. A person infected with Ebola is not contagious until they start to have symptoms.

What are you doing to protect against Ebola at your location?

We have systems in place to quickly identify suspected cases of Ebola and to isolate any suspected case. Our staff are getting regular updates and training on managing possible patients with Ebola. We are following strict, tested procedures for infection control.

Any patient with Ebola would be isolated first, and then cared for at a hospital. Hospitals in Washington and across the U.S. are well equipped to care for a person with Ebola by following appropriate infection control procedures.

Should I be worried about getting infected with Ebola from contact with people who have traveled from West Africa?

You do not have to worry about Ebola infection from contact with people who have been to West Africa and are not ill. Just because someone has been to West Africa or in an Ebola-affected area does not mean they are at risk for Ebola infection. And not all areas of West Africa are affected by the Ebola outbreak.

Travelers at airports in Ebola-affected countries are screened before departure and if they are sick or have been exposed to Ebola they cannot board an airplane until it is safe for them to travel. Travelers are also being screened again at the U.S. airports that are the main points of entry from those countries. People who are ill or who have been exposed to Ebola receive medical care or monitoring by public health authorities, if necessary.